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THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE

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As the call for the trained nurse increases, as it has in the last few years, we find the problem of securing recruits to our ranks a serious one. There is plenty of material, but how to get the best and turn out from our training schools the finished product, in the competent, well-balanced graduate nurse, is giving the superintendent of to-day food for serious thought.

I think too little consideration is given, especially among the smaller hospitals, to furnishing proper accommodations for the pupil nurses. It is not only necessary to provide comfortable and sanitary sleeping apartments, but it is vitally necessary that rooms for relaxation, study, and social intercourse be provided. A music room, library, and reception room should be a part of every school. The pupil nurse has two or three years of the most important part of her life to spend here. The environment should be pleasant, wholesome, and homelike. Superintendents of nurses cannot emphasize this matter too much before the trustees or other authorities of their hospital. Girls of eighteen and nineteen are accepted in our training schools almost everywhere at present. They are naturally pleasure loving, and come into an atmosphere of restraint. To a great many of them, the habit of discipline has not been inculcated in their home and preliminary school training. They feel dissatisfied, and the drudgery of hospital work, as they look at it, palls on them. At this time the homelike surroundings of a properly-appointed nurses' home play an important part. If the home is attractive, and facilities for innocent amusement are provided, they forget the fatigue and petty irritations of the day and are ready, after a pleasant evening spent with congenial companions, whose aims and purposes in life are identical with theirs, to go forth with strength renewed, mentally and physically.

The educational standard required of probationers is becoming more rigid every year. This is as it should be. I think all schools should require at least a high school education, or its equivalent, of all applicants, and that everything that can be done to elevate the intellectual and moral standard of the profession is necessary, and cannot be too fully emphasized. In the schools themselves there is a tendency to spend

insufficient time in theoretical work. I think if more off-duty time could be arranged, and a portion of that time spent in class study, quiz, explanatory and demonstrative work, much could be accomplished. The lectures and the practical work in the wards are not enough. The practice room for the probationers, as provided in some hospitals, is a good idea. There the probationer can be taught bed-making, and the use and care of different utensils, and other details before being assigned to wards.

The idea of the central nursing college, when it becomes an assured fact, will, I think, solve many of our present problems.

Many articles have been written along these lines in the past, and will be in the future. We are working with one object in view, the efficiency of the service and the dignity of the profession, and I feel sure that if we make our training schools attractive and keep up the standard, we will find many worthy recruits to our ranks.

[From the *British Journal of Nursing* of February 17, 1912.]

“We are sorry to note that there is difficulty in procuring the most suitable type of nurse for private service in India, with Lady Minto’s Association. But we fear the highly educated class of women is training in less and less numbers for our profession. We can hardly wonder at this depreciation, as the opposition of hospital committees in London to just educational conditions in the schools, and their most ungenerous fight, led by the London Hospital, to prevent the organization of the nursing profession founded on legal status, is doing inestimable harm to nursing far and wide in all its branches.”